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President Ware on Negro Education



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Bronze: A Book of Verse

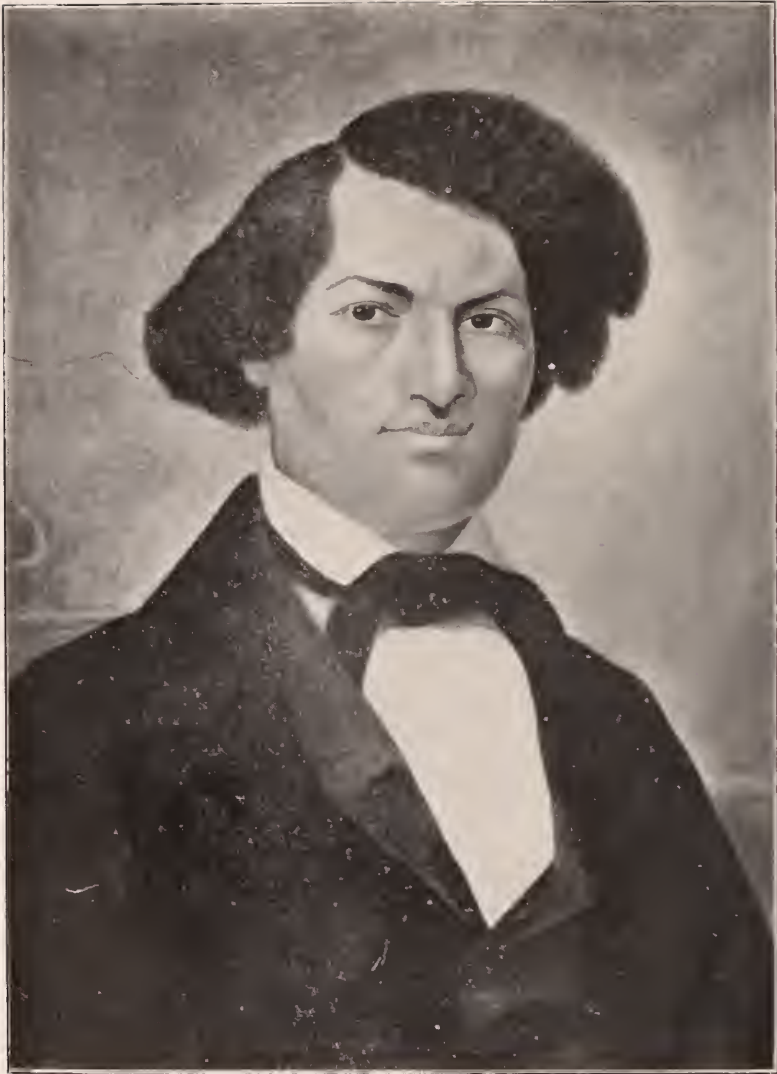
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FREDERICK DOUGLASS

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✓ Negroes Show Increased Interest in Education

Written by President Emeritus Edward Twichell Ware, Yale '97, for the *Yale News*

An increasing number of Negro students are making application for admission to Northern universities. Many of them come from the South where they are not admitted to the state universities or to the colleges attended by white people. Unless some adequate provision is made for the liberal education of colored people in the South the pressure for admission to the colleges and universities of the North will increase from year to year. The financial resources of the Negro Americans are increasing and their standards of living are steadily improving. They desire for their children the best education obtainable and if they cannot get it in the South they will seek it elsewhere.

This situation seems to be causing some embarrassment in the North. To exclude from college on account of racial inheritance any otherwise qualified person is directly opposed to the democratic principles upon which these colleges have been founded. There have almost always been a few Negroes in the Northern institutions, and they have been looked upon as evidence of the democratic faith that "a man's a man for a' that". But when they come in larger numbers it seems somehow to change the situation. We cannot look upon this simply as one phase of the larger problem of overcrowding. The embarrassment arises out of reluctance to take into the student body a group that is socially unwelcome. To say this seems to me to make a confession of human littleness, but yet I believe that it is true.

In the graduate and professional schools the question is not so acute, for here the students are more closely devoted to their studies, and a man is likely to be judged more on the

basis of scholarship and ability than on those vaguely defined but much desired qualities which make one socially acceptable. And yet the fact that many of the qualified Negro candidates for medical studies were unable this year to gain admission to medical schools indicates that the embarrassment of providing for Negro pupils apparently to some extent affects the professional as well as the undergraduate departments of our universities.

It seems to me that the situation can be met with justice to all concerned in the following way: First, by refusing to make discrimination against any candidate for admission on account of racial inheritance, and by applying the tests for admission impartially to all who make application; secondly, by strengthening and developing the institutions for the liberal education of the Negroes in the South, and, where the demand justifies, by creating professional schools in connection with these institutions. If we can follow this general plan there will still be Negro students in our Northern universities and colleges; but the great majority of them will of their own choice seek their education and in large measure their professional training in the Southern schools which maintain a high standard of academic excellence, and where pupils may attend at less expense and find freer and happier social relations among their fellow students.

The elimination of Negro students from Northern universities cannot in justice be effected; neither is it to be desired. One great problem before this nation is to find the way of inter-racial sympathy and co-operation. There must be some places of contact where our Negro and white youth can come together on equal footing and with mutual understanding. Where better than in our universities? It is one way of overcoming in our youth the provincialism to which their elders are so prone. It is a fitting task for an institution of liberal education. One's whole attitude toward the Negro race is often liberalized by an acquaintance with one colored man of

ability and character. In the friendship of college men of different races is the best basis for inter-racial understanding.

Moreover, it is a good thing for the Negro youth to compete in college with the youth of another race. It brings them both up against the same intellectual standards and prevents the development of a separate racial standard of intelligence. The Negro student's familiarity with methods and standards of education in the large universities has a stimulating effect upon the whole system of Negro education in the South, for many of these students—especially those who take advantage of the summer school courses at Columbia and Chicago universities—are teachers, and many of the rest are destined to be teachers in the South.

The Southern schools for the Negroes are in general of two types, the industrial schools and the colleges. The former are better known throughout the land, Hampton and Tuskegee being the great outstanding examples. But there are no less than sixty institutions for Negroes in the South which go by the name of college or university. But comparatively few of them can offer courses which appeal to the most capable and progressive of the youth of the race. If these few could be adequately supported and developed they would go much further toward meeting the Negro demand for liberal education.

May I, by way of illustration, take the case of Atlanta University in Atlanta, Georgia? This institution has a special claim upon the interest of Yale men, for it was founded by a Yale man, Edmund A. Ware, '63, and has been under the presidency of Yale men from the beginning. Atlanta University is co-educational; its present work is that of high school, normal school and college. Special emphasis is placed upon the preparation of teachers. The Georgia State Board of Education grants professional teachers' certificates to qualified graduates. The American Medical Association has recently placed Atlanta University in Group I. among Negro

colleges, for excellence of its pre-medical work in science. This institution was chartered in 1867 "for the liberal and Christian education of youth", and provision made for the development of a university with graduate schools. The time has now come when Atlanta University with reasonable development and adequate support could go much farther toward meeting the Negro demand for higher education. The present equipment is good as far as it goes, and the buildings are filled to capacity, but of the 550 pupils enrolled about 400 are of high school grade. A new building to care for the high school would make room for the development of normal school and college classes and would serve as a practice school for the college pupils who are preparing to be teachers. On the campus of sixty acres there is ample room for the building of a medical school and hospital in accordance with the provisions of the charter. If such a school were established by Atlanta University, properly equipped and manned, it would soon be filled by qualified students eager to study medicine but unable to find admittance elsewhere because of the limited capacity of existing schools or, in some cases, because of their unwillingness to admit Negroes.

The situation at Atlanta is probably duplicated in others of the old established institutions of liberal education for the Negroes, — institutions which by their constant loyalty to their pupils and graduates and by their long years of effective service, have gained the affection of the Negroes and the confidence of the whites, and which enjoy the co-operation of both. What I propose is not that any door should be closed in the face of aspiring Negro students, but that the door of opportunity in the South should be opened wide.

The Portrait of Frederick Douglass

It is all of thirty years ago, that I drove with my brother from Charlestown, N. H., to Walpole to call upon his friends, the Hoopers of Brooklyn, who were then in their summer

home. My introduction to Mrs. Hooper interested her and she invited me to a chamber and showed me upon the wall a portrait of Frederick Douglass, and explained that it was painted for Mr. Douglass as a young man and presented to her father, Josiah Holden of Kennebunk, Maine, Mr. Holden being a warm friend of Mr. Douglass; and the barn of Mr. Holden being a station of the "Underground Railroad".

Some years later my brother and I called upon Mr. and Mrs. Hooper in their Brooklyn home and I reminded Mrs. Hooper of seeing the portrait and suggested that it ought to be given to some institution that would value it, and where it would be perpetually preserved. To this Mrs. Hooper half assented.

This past summer I wrote my brother, asking that he see Mrs. Hooper and remind her of the half-promise. Later in the summer when Mrs. Hooper was in Walpole, N. H., she wrote my brother that if the portrait was to reach Atlanta University that season that then was the time before the house was closed for the year. My brother at once motored over and secured the portrait, which was then carefully packed and sent to Atlanta.

The portrait represents Mr. Douglass as a young man and must have been painted after he returned from Europe in 1847. I have reasons for thinking that it was painted about 1850, when Mr. Douglass was 33 years old. I do not know that any member of the family ever saw the painting, but a photograph was recognised at once by the Douglass family in Washington.

While the portrait does not look like the Frederick Douglass that some of us recall, it does present the orator in his young and vigorous manhood; calls up the story of a friendship of two men, one with African blood, from Maryland, and one of English descent, from Maine; and reminds us of that movement throughout the North looking toward the abolishing of slavery, the "Underground Railroad."

EDGAR H. WEBSTER.

The Work of Principal Usher

In the *Congregationalist* for November 16 there is an article entitled, "Dorchester Academy and a Glimpse of Florida." The article is chiefly concerning the Academy and conditions in its neighborhood, and speaks very highly of the work of Samuel C. Usher, one of our graduates of the class of 1912. Mrs. Usher is also one of our graduates. We give some quotations from the article.

Midway, or Medway, a few miles from the Academy, was once the center of a flourishing white settlement. A fine old church is there, which the Georgia Society of the Colonial Dames of America is restoring. Once a year the members of the Society and the descendants of former residents flock back to the place, hold a service and engage in other proceedings. This place was an active center and a scene of conflict during the Revolutionary War. In the historic, walled cemetery, across from the church, Congress has erected a lofty monument to two Revolutionary generals.

Decay and Dilapidation

It is tragic to see the decay of this once prosperous place, and pitiful are the signs of poverty and dilapidation in the section surrounding the Academy. Here one finds in Southern form what has happened in so many communities in the North. There has been little to attract and afford opportunity to ambitious young people and the graduates of Dorchester Academy have mostly gone out to seek larger scope.

The climate and general conditions are not conducive to energy. In fact, one is amazed at the initiative and activity of men like Principal Usher, and his father, both manifestly men of that insight and vigor that are the salvation of many a community. But the people as a whole tend to settle down into a poverty from which it is not easy to rise. Here are little one room cabins where live families of ten and twelve. The one public school which we visited was in a shocking condition of disrepair, and we were told that it was one of the best. No one perceives and deplors these conditions more than Principal Usher. It is his conviction that if the section were drained much development might be possible, but in addition to public inertia, one has to contend with the listlessness of the people.

A Bright Contrast

It was depressing to find such conditions in the very environment of Dorchester Academy, but it would be a great mistake to conclude that that institution is needless or ineffective. On the contrary, its work is a bright spot in a dark picture. Right here in this depressing environ-

ment are young people competent to rise and with the passion to rise. The records of the Academy tell an almost incredible tale of yearning for education. A careful investigation of the three hundred students showed that these walk an average distance of six and three-eighths miles each day to and from school. Two pupils each walk over seventeen miles a day, and one who walked over twenty miles never missed a day from school in two years. Where can such a record of endurance and persistence be duplicated? Are pupils of that caliber not worthy of the opportunity? All honor to the A. M. A. which affords it.

Dorchester Academy is manned by an all-colored staff, and all the teachers have had thorough training, many of them with post-graduate preparation, in the finest of Northern institutions. The staff is largely composed of young women to whom much more remunerative openings would be possible. When one finds these products of A. M. A. schools, going back to isolated environments to serve the A. M. A. and their own people, it is surely a tribute to the efficacy of our Southern work.

A Lynching

The darkness and tragedy that hover in the background were brought into prominence when Principal Usher drove us down the road a short distance from Midway church and cemetery, to show us a tree where last June, as he passed one morning, he found two Negroes hanging to a limb. They were men who had been accused of an offence, apparently unjustly, and were being conveyed to Savannah, presumably for safe keeping, when, it is suspected, with the connivance of the very officers who should have protected them, they were seized and hanged.

Principal Usher has been at Dorchester Academy four years. He has had fine technical training. He is a man of mechanical genius and of practical outlook—the sort of man well adapted to face the problems of his district. Given time, we believe he will effect great transformations in that district, and make the power of the Academy felt not only in pupils who go forth, but in the betterment of the immediate environment.

Bronze: A Book of Verse

This is a volume of poems by Mrs. Georgia Douglass Johnson of the class of 1893, published by the B. J. Brimmer Company of Boston, Mass. These poems of Mrs. Johnson are short, sincerely poetical, and full of feeling. Mr. William Stanley Braithwaite, one of the leading critics, says of this book: "Here is lyric poignancy of a kind not yet practiced by any other woman writing verse in America, because the personal

note is absorbed in the utterance of an entire people." We reproduce for our readers in this issue one of the poems. And we quote the larger part of the review of the book that appears in the February issue of the *Crisis*.

In Bronze, Mrs. Johnson has at last come to her own—if not also in a peculiar way, *into* her own. A certain maturity that is to be expected of a third volume of verse, is here, but it is the home-coming of the mind and heart to intimately racial thought and experience which is to be especially noted and commended. We can say of this that it is timely both for the author and her readers: for her, it represents the fruition of a premeditated plan not to speak racially until she had learned to speak and attract attention in the universal key; for her readers, of many classes and sections of opinion, it represents more perhaps an occasion of seeing the "color problem" at the heart, as it affects the inner life. - - -

One of Mrs. Johnson's literary virtues is condensation. She often distills the trite and commonplace into an elixir. Following the old-fashioned lyric strain and the sentimentalist cult of the common emotions, she succeeds because by sincerity and condensation, her poetry escapes to a large extent its own limitations. Here in the subject of these verses, there is however a double pitfall: avoiding sentimentality is to come dangerously close to propaganda. This is also deftly avoided—more by instinct than by calculation. Mrs. Johnson's silences and periods are eloquent, she stops short of the preachy and prosaic and is always lyrical and human. Almost before one has shaped his life to "Oh! the pity of it", a certain fresh breeze of faith and courage blows over the heart, and the mind revives to a healthy, humanistic optimist. Mrs. Johnson seems to me to hear a message, a message that gains through being softly but intensely insinuated between the lines of her poems—"Let the traditional instincts of women heal the world that travails under the accumulated woes of the uncompensated instincts of men", or to speak more in her way, "May the saving grace of the mother-heart save humanity."

"Education in Africa"

The above is the title of a most valuable volume recently published by the Phelps-Stokes Fund. It presents the facts growing out of an educational survey of western and southern Africa, made by Dr. Thomas Jesse Jones, educational director of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, and several associates. The cooperating agencies were the Missionary Boards of North America, the British Missionary Societies, the Phelps-Stokes Fund and the Colonial Offices of Great Britain, France and Belgium. The inspection occupied ten months during the fall and winter of 1920-21, during which time the Commission traveled twenty-five

thousand miles. The report of its work is very interesting to any who wish to know the facts in the development of Africa. For while the especial object in view was to examine the educational conditions, these were so closely interwoven with the economic and political conditions that the information contained in the work is far from being wholly educational. In fact, the thought of the adaptation of educational effort to the conditions as they exist is dominant in the whole work. It is a strong plea for a real and vital educational policy in Africa.

“The Negro in Chicago”

Mr. Augustus G. Dill of our college class of 1906, later our associate professor of sociology, and now for many years the business manager of the *Crisis*, gives a valuable and interesting review of the above book in the January *Crisis*. It is the report of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations, being a study of race relations in that city as between colored and white, and of the Chicago riot of 1919. Mr. Dill gives first a valuable summary of the contents of the book, and closes with this comment; “This is a valuable addition to our all too meager worth-while literature on the Negro problem. As such it deserves a wide reading.”

The senior college class presented three characteristic modern plays, under the direction of Mrs. Caroline Bond Day, the night of January 19. One was *King Argimenes* and the *Unknown Warrior*, by Lord Dunsany; the second was *The Far-Away Princess*, by Herman Suderman; and the third was *Chitra*, by Rabindranath Tagore. There was a large audience and the participants did finely in their rendition of the various characters.

To Atlanta University—Its Founders and Teachers

The last poem in “*Bronze: A Book of Verse*.” See review elsewhere.

Pass down the aisle of buried years to-night,
 And stand uncovered in that holy place
 Where noble structures lift their hallowed height
 Beneath a bending Heaven’s chaste embrace,
 The fruit of those who scorned the path of ease,
 To buckle on the armaments of care
 Like to the Son of Man Himself, were these
 Who gave themselves for brother men—less fair.
 Before the blinding footlights of to-day
 We man our parts within Life’s tragic play,
 Full mindful of the earnest love and care
 That keeps eternal watch and vigil there;
 Nor do they need fair monuments and scrolls—
 Their memories are deathless in our souls.

The football season has been especially gratifying to our students and graduates because of the uniform success of the team in all games played. We give a cut of the successful team below, and append a statement as to the score of the games. All of these games except that with Fisk were played in Atlanta.

ATLANTA UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM, 1922



A. U. 20 Knox Institute 0 A. U. 7 Haines Institute 6 A. U. 30 Paine College 0 A. U. 7 Fisk University 6
 A. U. 18 Tuskegee Institute 0 A. U. 21 Clark University 0 A. U. 18 Morris Brown University 6

Campus Notes

Mrs. Willie D. Rush, the matron of our dining room for a number of years, attended the Matrons' Conference at Hampton Institute from November 27 to December 20. This was a conference growing out of a matrons' course that has been offered in the Hampton Summer School since 1916. Twenty-one women were present representing 21 schools and 11 states. The discussions had as their purpose the comparing of notes, and the considering of various measures that would lead to the improvement of the condition of students in boarding schools. Matters were considered pertaining not only to dining halls, but also to the laundry and all forms of dormitory life. The meetings were in charge of Miss Carrie A. Lyford, an expert in institutional management, with wide experience with the Federal Board for Vocational Education. Mrs. Rush reports a very interesting conference.

Professor and Mrs. E. H. Webster have been delighted to have with them for nearly four weeks their only child, Miss Amy Frances Webster, of Aurora, Minnesota. Miss Webster is a graduate of Oberlin College, has taught in Massachusetts, spent two years in Beirut, Syria, graduated in 1922 from the secretarial course in Boston University, and is now connected with the public school work in Aurora. It was a delight to her parents and her former friends to have her again in Atlanta, during her period of vacation.

Miss Margaret Wrong of the World's Student Christian Federation was our guest January 8-11. She visited and spoke at other institutions besides our own. It was our privilege to hear her at chapel exercises January 10, and that same night she addressed in our chapel a gathering of students from the various Negro institutions in the city. It was a great pleasure to have Miss Wrong, who is one of the secretaries, present the work of the Federation, and in general the claims of a consecrated and vigorous Christian life.

Mr. Clarence Cameron White, the well known violinist and composer, gave a recital to a full house in our chapel on Wednesday evening January the seventeenth. The recital was most interesting and was highly appreciated by the large audience. Our pleasure in hearing him was all the greater because of the services which Mr. White has been glad to render this institution in connection with the pageant. He was the conductor of the orchestra in all of the New England performances and also in New York and Brooklyn, rendering most excellent service.

Another musical entertainment was a song recital by Mr. Sidney Woodward on the third of December. Mr. Woodward was for four years the teacher of vocal music in this institution, and his tenor voice displayed itself to splendid advantage in his recital that night.

Dr. Adams and Professor Webster attended the exercises at the inauguration of Reverend J. W. Simmons as president of Clark University December the twelfth, Dr. Adams representing Atlanta University on the program. President Simmons appears to be exactly the right man in the right place, and has made a splendid impression in the beginning of his work at Clark University. He preached for us on Sunday, January the fourteenth.

In the religious work of Atlanta University we have sometimes had a full-time chaplain and at other times have divided the work among different members of our own force and called in various preachers from the city. This year we are following the second of these methods. Professor Strong of the faculty has regularly one fourth of the work. Prayer meetings are led by various members of our faculty or by representatives of the student religious organizations. Sunday services not taken by Professor Strong have been taken by members of our own force in part, Messrs. Adams and Davidson and Post and Webster; and in part by various speakers from other institutions in the city.

Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Bunce were with us for three weeks during the latter part of December, leaving the first of January. Mrs. Bunce is better known to our readers under her former name of Miss Gertrude H. Ware, for sixteen years in charge of our kindergarten work, and after that spending a considerable part of her time the past two years in directing the pageant. It was a great pleasure to have Mr. and Mrs. Bunce with us and we hope they will repeat the visit and make it longer next time. They are now in Washington, where Mrs. Bunce is making preparations to give the pageant early in March.

Miss Lizzie A. Pingree, to whose illness we referred in our last issue, left for her home in Denmark, Maine, on the first of January. She traveled from here to Washington with Mr. and Mrs. Bunce, and was there met by her nephew. She made the journey in safety and comfort. Her fellow workers and the students, especially the boys in South Hall, greatly miss her presence, which has meant so much to us for over twenty-five years. Her work is being taken by Miss Bertha Rogers of Boston, who is showing excellent qualities in this important sphere of our school life, as matron of the boys' dormitory.

Our superintendent of buildings and grounds, Mr. A. S. Huth, has been planting trees on the campus, to take the place of other trees that have been dying or that are likely soon to die. The varieties set out include the water oak, sweet gum, Lombardy poplar, cork elm, cedar deodora, and both red and white dogwood. Two quite large trees have been transplanted from their former position, where they were more of an injury than a benefit. Trimming and spraying has also been done. Professor J. A. Davidson has rendered material assistance to Mr. Huth in this work.



HOUSEKEEPING COTTAGE





THE good education of youth has been esteemed by wise men in all ages as the surest foundation of the happiness both of private families and of commonwealths.

— *Benjamin Franklin.*

